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who can afford to use European soap[1] delight to do so, and laundry work, in particular ironing, is considered a fashionable employment and one that is a mark of wealth and status. As such, it is chiefly in the hands of the men, many of whom learn to iron in domestic service. The husbands as the wage-earners are in any case considered sole owners of both their own and their wives' clothes,[2] and when the young man can acquire a bit of soap he likes to wash and iron in public outside his hut, surrounded by an admiring crowd of small boys. Thus the washing of clothes is women's work in the old-fashioned villages, but a male occupation under more modern conditions.

Women care for their children devotedly, but rarely give up any time to them exclusively. Babies are washed with warm water and massaged each morning and fed with gruel twice a day (cf. p. 69), but otherwise they are slung on their mothers' backs wherever they go—to work or to a beer-drink—but are not definitely 'amused' for any period of time or taken for walks. Small sisters do most of the work of supervising the younger children, and thus relieve the mothers.

Preparation of Meals.

If the housework proper, as we have described it, is not a very heavy drain on a woman's time, the preparation of meals and all the associated activities are far longer and more complicated than in our society. Wood for the fire has to be collected daily, or every two days, and this is woman's work. A man fetches wood for his chief, or for a European when required to. For his wife he will only cut down a suitable tree stem on the way back from gardening, and leave it for her to pick up on her return. She usually carries a bundle of dried wood six to eight feet long on her head. When a village is newly built dry firewood is plentiful near home, but in two or three years' time the supply is almost exhausted and the phrase 'she has gone for firewood' (*Aya ku nkuni*) may mean an expedition of an hour or so. On the copper belt the problem has already become acute and well-paid Africans employ servants to gather their wood, or try to buy faggots in the native market —one of the causes of the great increase in the cost of living in urban areas.

[1] This practically only occurs in the neighbourhood of a white store.

[2] He wears her clothes whenever he likes, and I have seen men strip their wives as a dramatic gesture in a quarrel threatening to lead to divorce.

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Water must also be fetched from the stream morning and evening (*ukutapa menshi*). A good housewife always has one or two *inongo* full of water standing to cool in her hut, and has warm water ready in the early morning for her husband to wash in, and for the baby's bath. No man ever draws for himself under village conditions, and the fetching of water is reckoned one of the essential duties of a wife.[1] The provision of drinking water for her husband is equally a woman's duty, and at a chief's court where old-fashioned ceremony is still observed, his wives kneel to offer him water in a gourd.

Besides collecting wood and water the woman has to provide relish, and this takes up much of her time at certain seasons of the year. During the rainy months regular expeditions are made daily to look for mushrooms. Women and girls go out with carrying baskets and line up across the bush, each picking what she finds. Such an expedition might take two or three hours. Wild spinaches have also to be looked for, and in the hot weather the girls are sent to gather *icikanda* orchids which grow in certain spots known to the natives, or the different wild fruits. Even when garden vegetables are available it may be necessary to walk two or three miles to a distant field to pick them. This is specially so when the gourds and pumpkins ripen, and it is reckoned that every other day the housewife must go out to her gardens to pick them (*ukusaba*) as they reach their prime. All these accessory activities have somehow to be fitted into the day besides the regular gardening and cooking.

The main processes of porridge making and cooking relish are themselves lengthy. The average time taken by seven women to thresh, winnow, and grind flour was 7·4 minutes a pound, and since about six pounds would be used daily by an ordinary family the time taken would be about three-quarters of an hour.[2] These women were, however, working uninterruptedly and knew they were being timed. An hour would be a more likely time under normal conditions. Different relishes take half to three-quarters

[1] A middle-aged widower and widow were discussing the possibility of marriage prosaically together. The would-be bridegroom said, 'Are you the kind of woman who always has hot water ready for her husband in the morning, and never grumbles when he asks for more?' The prospective bride answered, 'Yes, that is what I do. But are you the kind of man who gives his wife a new cloth occasionally and doesn't spend his money all on himself?'

[2] For note [2] see next page.

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burning (*ukusankula*). He must lay them on the ground in some semblance of a row with all the stems pointing in one direction (*ukuloshye mikongole mukati*). This will distinguish his branches from those of his neighbours, who make it their business to point their boughs in the other direction. It also eases the work of the women who have later to lift the heavy branches and stack them. A careful man helps his wife in this way—an old man, as an informant usually adds in explanation, taking it for granted that the two terms are synonymous. 'Young men leave the branches as they fall, "*pambilibili*", to use an expressive native term, which we should translate by "all anyhow".'

Next comes the business of stacking the branches. Here the rationale of the *icitemene* system becomes evident. The aim of the native is plainly not to clear the bush of obstructions, but to collect the maximum amount of brushwood to burn. It is the ash which he considers valuable, and the burning of the soil. The woman who piles the branches carries them as high as possible from the ground, so that twigs and leaves should not snap off in transit, and thus waste valuable fuel.

Piling the branches is the hardest work a Bemba woman does, and I have heard the wives of urban natives say that they were afraid to go back to the villages 'where we have to pile branches'. The women lift boughs, often fifteen or twenty feet long, stagger as they balance the length on their heads, adjust themselves to the weight, and start off with the load. All morning they come and go in this way. There is a good deal of skill required in the stacking of branches. They must be laid with their stems to the centre, so that they radiate out in a roughly circular or oval pile. The branches must be piled evenly one on top of the other until they reach a height of about two feet. If any portion of the garden is only lightly covered with boughs, the soil beneath it will be only partly burnt. Natives point to barren patches in a millet field and say the branches were not properly piled on that spot. As the end of the work approaches the woman makes a circular edge to the stack (*umukubililo*) by arranging small branches round in a ring. This is to prevent the fire from spreading too far into the bush, and to provide an extra thick pile of ashes for planting cucumbers and gourds round the edge of the garden.

The work of *ukutema* begins with the cold weather in April or May, and it may last right through till August or September.

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241 excitement like creatures possessed. The older people stood watching, quietly satisfied. Next morning nothing was left but a circular bed of ashes around the blackened trunks of the mutilated trees. The heavy work of the year was done. The *icitemene* (a thing cut) had become an *ubukula*, a garden, now.

Sowing the millet (*ukutanda male*). After the burning of the gardens nothing remains except to wait for the rains. The main millet crop (*amale yakalamba*) needs to be sown when the ground is soft from the heavy rains in December or January, but the quick-growing millet (*mwangwe*) is planted in the small garden patches earlier, usually in November, while millet sown in a third-year garden (*icifwani*) is known as *nkungwila*, and is scattered over the dry soil before the coming of the first rains. This process is called *ukupamina*.[1]

[462] Either a man or a woman may sow millet, but the owner himself will do so if he is at home. The job is a skilled one, and a man with a high reputation as a sower is often asked to plant the garden of a younger man. An educated native told me that seed sown by a good sower would produce ten baskets of millet as against five from a garden badly sown, but I never tested this statement.

Seeds are carried in a gourd or basket, and the sower first marks out the garden with a stick into strips about a yard wide. This is to ensure that each part of the ground is covered. The sower walks up and down each strip casting the seed broadcast with a flick of the wrist that sends the tiny seeds flying in a fine spray (*ukuposa male*). The woman walks backward behind him throwing up earth over the seed with a forked stick (*ulukoba*) in the case of hot-weather sowing, or scattering it wide with a hoe (*ukutanda*) if the newly burnt garden is being sown. This is a difficult art. A clod is swung sideways shoulder high on the hoe, and then tossed over with a light movement that scatters the earth evenly over the ground, so that the millet seeds lie with a surface covering of soil. After this a careful cultivator will dig a small trench about ten inches deep round the edge of the field to draw off the heavy rain. Some other crops are sown with the millet or before it. Gourd and pumpkin seeds, etc., are planted one by one round the edge of the garden at the beginning of the rains or before them. The perennial Kaffir corn (*sonkwe*) is often sown broadcast over the

[1] This millet is also know[illegible] *icikuku*, probably from the wind of that name that blows before the rains.

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241 *Harvesting the millet.* The millet begins to ripen during April, first the quick-growing *mwangwe* or that sown in dry weather (*icibuku*), the self-sown millet known as (*icimbuka*), and then the main crop (*amale yakalamba*) in May or even June. All these cold weather months the people mostly live in grass shelters near their gardens, the women reaping, the men cutting trees for next year's *icitemene*. In a new village there is plenty of timber to cut near by and the move to the *imitanda* seems unnecessary, although the Bemba appear to enjoy it as a kind of holiday. They like, too, to break off from the main community in small family groups. Often a man of standing will use the opportunity to see if he can collect unofficially a large enough following to enable him to set up a village of his own. People worsted in a quarrel, angry, insulted, accused of witchcraft, or in arrears with their tax, retire to *imitanda*, always sure of a plausible explanation of their conduct. In a village which has been built three or four years the gardens may lie far out into the bush at a distance of eight or ten miles, and in this case it is really necessary for the people to camp near them. Otherwise traditional agricultural practice seems to be made an excuse for temporarily leaving the village when desired.

[462] [912] Women alone do the reaping. They use small knives about four inches long, petal-shaped, and fixed into tiny handles about two inches long. These they grasp in the palm of the hand, and cut off each millet head with the blade, dropping it into a small basket. To choose the right moment to harvest is important. Unripe grain is wasteful; over-ripe blows too much dust into the eyes; damp heads hang down and are hard to cut. An educated native told me that a field sufficient to fill three-quarters of a granary would only provide enough to fill one half if the millet were reaped at the wrong time, but this statement I never tested.

The reaper must stand with the wind behind her, or she will be blinded by dust. She usually walks to the centre of her garden, clears a small space, does magic to give the new food lasting power (*icibyalilo*),[1] and then reaps one basket and puts it out to dry. Later she is usually joined by others and the women work in rows across the field. In a chief's garden as many as twenty women may be working together in this way. Sometimes

[1] Cf. pp. 206–8.

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241 favourite device of burning the ground, especially where Kaffir corn or maize have been grown the previous year. In this case he strips off the straw left standing on the *mputa* during the hot season (September), piles it in the hollows between the mounds, sets fire to it, and leaves the ashes for the first rains to fall. Then he covers the spot with a small heap of earth and thus makes tiny *mputa* between the old ones. A clever cultivator was enthusiastic about this method and said, 'If you burn the soil and make small *mputa* on top and the rain has fallen on the ashes, that gives *umufundo*. You can plant anything on top then, maize or sorghum or beans, everything!' Thus starting from a general idea that subsidiary crops are better planted on mounds, and that old soil can be renewed by exposing a new surface to the air, there is every variety of mound-making practised by the Bemba, from the thorough redigging every two or three years to the semi-renewal of the mounds done annually.

462 Hoeing is considered hard and unromantic work by the Bemba, quite unlike millet cultivation. Both sexes hoe, and the people go out in two's or three's to dig mounds; a husband and wife together or two or three related women. Occasionally a man will get up a working party to be rewarded with beer, and will thus put a big stretch of ground under cultivation. But I never heard the slightest interest expressed in mound-making, and older men take it for granted that the young people will not bother with it. '*Tumputa twa balumendo*' ('The little mounds of young men'), they comment in passing small and hurriedly made *mputa*. This attitude to mound-cultivation has important results on the food produced. To dig new mounds for village beds at the foundation of a settlement is necessary, and it is an almost invariable practice to dig up an old burnt garden into *mputa* after the last crop of millet has been got from it. But, in the succeeding years, the digging and redigging of the beds, to get the best results from the soil, depends on the individual's energy and determination, and, as the main hoeing season falls during the rainy months, i.e. the time when food is shortest, the work is often carelessly done or left till another year. '*Ubunayani bwaisa*' ('Laziness fell on us') was a comment made.

Planting. Women usually keep the seeds for their subsidiary crops mixed in one gourd in what seemed to me a rather haphazard manner, and many natives denied that they selected seeds with any care to secure good strains. However, after questioning

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a number of cultivators, I came to the conclusion that all natives distinguish the slow- from the quick-growing millet (*mwangwe*), the perennial Kaffir corn (*sonkwe*) from the more common annual (*amasaka*), and the quick-growing maize (*kalimimwa*) from the slow-growing (*punga*). These strains they keep apart and sow separately. The long-vined cow-pea (*ililanda lya nkula*) is also distinguished from the shorter (*ililanda lya nceshya*) or another variety with small pods (*ililanda lya busulala*). Pumpkin and gourd seeds are actually selected from plants that bore well the previous year, especially in the case of the gourds used to hollow out for beer-gourds, dippers, or oil flasks. But, for the rest, though older natives distinguish about twenty different kinds of millet, according to the colour or size of the seed, and many varieties of maize, Kaffir corn, and legumes, they do not seem to select one type of seed rather than another when planting their gardens.

Women generally plant the subsidiary crops, especially those on the *mputa*. This is not a long operation, since the aim of the gardener is to sow a succession of vegetables, and therefore she plants her mounds from week to week throughout the sowing season.

The art of sowing consists in the careful planting of seeds on the mounds to suit their habit of growth and time of ripening. The Bemba reckon to grow at least two different vegetables on each *mputa*. Thus, pumpkins are often planted round the base of a mound on the top of which maize or Kaffir corn has been sown. Their long vines trail between the *mputa* while the grain crop shoots up on top. Sweet potatoes are also paired with Kaffir corn, since the former are dug up in October and the mounds can then be left to 'get rich' (*ukufunda*) till the latter is sown in December. cassava and sweet potatoes make another pair, and these are planted together. The cuttings of cassava are stuck vertically on top, and the sweet potatoes at an angle on the sides. Beans and peas are also commonly grown with Kaffir corn or maize. The long-vined cow-pea (*ililanda lya nkula*) is very carefully placed on the top of a mound because of its growth.[1]

Natives are convinced of the value of this system of mixed planting. Near Kasama, a man who had filled his *mputa* with cassava only was criticized as being lazy, although the mounds

[1] It may even be scattered broadcast on a *icifwani* garden with small mounds dug in between or mixed with Kaffir corn and sown in the same fashion.

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226 The first sign of a fish floating stupefied to the top was greeted with shrieks of excitement. Men waded down into the stream and [227 462] pronged each fish as it appeared with their fine barbed spears (*ukuela*) while the women caught them in baskets as they floated by. The men admitted that the women's method was more efficient but added, 'We men must not take fish like the women do. *Our* work is to spike the fish with spears.' Most of the village company returned to the village in the afternoon with eight fish of about 1½ lb. between them, but laughing and contented with the day.

More serious *ububa* expeditions are made on the bigger rivers when temporary weirs are put up across a bend in the stream and fish traps set in these to prevent any stupefied fish being carried down the river. The fishers catch what they can with spears and baskets by day, and return next morning to look at the traps. In the valuable fishing pools near the Chambesi the territorial chief organizes fishing drives. Children use poison in tiny rivulets and catch small fish in them with traps.

226 227 2. *Fish traps.* The second common method of fishing is by trapping. Fish traps are set on the banks of flooded rivers with their mouths towards the stream to catch the fish when they leave the main body of the water in the breeding season, or reversed in the opposite direction to trap the young fish returning from the breeding places to the parent stream. They may also be set in specially constructed dikes or weirs. Trapping is the work of men alone.

The traps (*mono*, plur. *miona*) are of the simplest possible construction and similar to those commonly used by Bantu people, both in Central and South Africa. They consist of reed cones, either with an open end or with a circular disk with a hole in the centre plaited into the aperture to act as a kind of valve to prevent the escape of fish that have been sucked into the cone by the force of the current.

The different types include the tiny traps used by children, about two feet long and five inches in diameter (*tinto*), made by soaking split reeds in the stream for a day or so, tying them at one end, and plaiting them together with bark strands at intervals of about four inches in order to form a flexible cone which remains taut when the open end is fixed between two sticks (cf. diagram 1). They can only be used when the floods are beginning in February and March, and are set overnight by the boys whenever they can find some small eddying current among the grasses on the bank of a stream. They are also used by the girls in the dry weather, in

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CHAPTER XVIII

LABOUR AND TIME

I HAVE now described the chief economic activities of the Bemba—agriculture, fishing, and hunting—the pleasures and anxieties connected with them, and the body of empirical knowledge which guides the people in their work. But the whole question of food production has still to be discussed from the labour point of view. Where land is as plentiful as it is in this area, the amount of ground a man can cultivate obviously depends on the labour he can command, the annual sequence of his different activities, and the whole system of economic co-operation by which garden and other work is carried out. Less obviously, but equally certainly, production also depends on the people's economic rhythm, their habits of work, and their method of reckoning time.

Here I should say at once that my observations on the use of time by native cultivators are far from complete. It is difficult, of course, to calculate exactly the time and energy expended on any kind of work which is not subject to industrial conditions—regular hours, output, wages, &c.—but with primitive people who have no conception of a regular working day, and who do not thus calculate by fixed time units, the task is even harder. It would require a specialist study by some one familiar with the economic calendar and methods of work of the Bemba, who was able to concentrate on this particular problem by means of records of individual activities and daily diaries. This I was never able to do for long enough in any one place. I have, however, given such material as I have, both because of the practical importance of this subject and also because it is a sphere in which anthropologists have so far done very little work. I believe my observations on the division of labour, seasonal calendar, &c., are adequate, but the records of daily activities (Appendix, Table E) were only taken in two villages, and then for very short periods.

Division of Labour.

Briefly speaking, there is no specialization of labour in this area except on a basis of sex. Handicrafts—such as basket-making, iron-work, and pottery—are chiefly in the hands of a few individuals,

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462 who are reckoned to have special skill in this direction. Iron-
463 work is definitely a hereditary craft, but such specialists are very few in number. None of these craftsmen or women are employed whole time. They merely take a day off now and then to ply their trade, whenever any one can be found to employ them. Our problem is therefore to study the organization of agriculture, hunting, and fishing rather than different crafts.

462 The sex division of labour has already been indicated in the descriptive accounts of the different activities. This information is given in tabular form below for the convenience of readers of this section.

Food Production

Men	*Women*
Tree-cutting. Sowing. Fencing. Hoeing. Hunting and fishing (nets, spears, and poisoning). Collecting honey.	Branch-piling. Sowing. Harvesting. Hoeing. Fishing (poisoning method). Collecting bush foods.

Domestic Work

	Cooking. Brewing. Fetching water. Mudding floors. Collecting firewood. Making salt and 'soda'.

Other Activities

Building huts and granaries (cutting stakes, mudding walls, thatching). Path-making and clearing. Making furniture, musical instruments, &c. Baskets. Fish traps. Mats (non-specialized). Ironwork. Sewing. Laundering. Bark-cloth (formerly).	Hut-making (preparing clay for walls and whitewashing). Path-cleaning. Pottery.

It will be seen from this table that the only activities for which men are absolutely essential are: tree-cutting, fencing, house-making, hunting, and fishing; although the heavy hoeing should, properly speaking, be men's work rather than women's—that is to say, the men usually hoe up the grass and other roots (*ukusapike fisapi*) and the women follow and cover up the upturned roots with earth (*ukushikila*). It must be noted, however, that there is no strong taboo preventing a man doing a woman's work or vice versa, such as is common among so many primitive peoples. Women do not cut trees and hunt, because they are physically unfitted to do so,

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and men do not willingly cook, because it is a woman's occupation. On the other hand, men do most of the women's agricultural work, when performing their tribute labour for the chief (including harvesting and piling branches), and it is common to find a man cooking for the chief when the latter is travelling through the country, since by this means he avoids the dangers of impure contact with his cooking-fire. In the same way women try to fence gardens now, however inefficiently, and near Kasama I saw an emancipated woman mudding the walls of her hut instead of a man. This conduct was thought amusing and rather daring, but not definitely wrong. There is no doubt that the rigid sex dichotomy of labour based on magic beliefs, which is characteristic of some primitive societies, does not now exist among the Bemba, and all the handicrafts, such as basket-making and mat-making, could probably be taught to the women without much protest.

Organization of Labour.

(*a*) *The family.* The essential economic unit is the individual household, since each husband makes a garden for each of his wives and builds her a granary, but just as each family shares supplies with the other householders in the matrilocal group, so their agricultural labour is done in co-operation. This is particularly so as regards the big millet gardens. During the early years of married life a young couple reckon to cultivate their village beds more or less alone, but the parties of men who go out together to cut trees or fence gardens usually consist of a father-in-law with his sons-in-law, and possibly young sons or maternal nephews under marriageable age. Young men like to work together, and therefore the men who have married daughters of the same household often make gardens near each other. The size of the group varies. In the old days it is probable that such a unit included four or five men and some boys, allowing for the inclusion of one or two slaves which was apparently the number usually owned by a rich commoner. In an old-fashioned village of to-day the team would be somewhat smaller, but would still include one or two sons-in-law, either working on their father-in-law's garden or camping near him in grass shelters at the tree-cutting season. For instance, in the specimen village Kasaka, Malalo, head family B, had an encampment of six grass huts, about three miles from the village occupied by himself, his three sons-in-law, and two

CALENDAR OF SEASONAL ACTIVITIES

Bemba months	*English equivalents*	*Weather*	*Food-supply*	MEN			WOMEN		
				Millet	*Subsidiary*	*Other activities*	*Gardening*		*Other activities*
Kabengele kanono	January	Heavy rain	Hunger month	..	Mound-digging and sowing	*Fishing*. Traps and nets set on flooded banks	..	Mound digging and sowing	Collecting mushrooms and caterpillars.
Kabengele kakalamba	February	,,	Hunger month. Cucurbits ripe	Fencing gardens	,, ,,	Build houses (new village)	..	,, ,,	,, ,,
Kutumpu	March	Rain slackening	Subsidiary crops ripe	..	,, ,,	,, ,,	Harvest (maize)	..	Collecting caterpillars.
Shinde	April	Rains cease	Early millet ripe	..	..	Fish weirs set	Harvest (millet—early)	..	..
Kapepo kanono	May	Cold weather	Ample food-supply	Tree-cutting	..	,, ,,	Harvest (millet—main crop)	Harvest (ground-nuts)	..
Kapepo kakalamba	June	,, ,,	,, ,,	,, ,,	..	..	,, ,,	,, ,,	..
Cikungulu pepo	July	,, ,,	,, ,,	,, ,,	..	..	Piling branches		
Lipukutu lunono	August	Hot weather	,, ,,	,, ,,	Dry weather sowing	Fish-poisoning. Net-hunting begins	,, ,,	,, ,,	..
Lipukutu lukalamba	September	,, ,,	,, ,,	,, ,,	,, ,,	Fish-poisoning. Net-hunting	,, ,,	Dry weather sowing	Collecting wild spinaches. Fish-poisoning.
Lusuba lunono	October	,, ,,	Less food	Firing gardens	..	,, ,,	Firing gardens	,, ,,	,, ,,
Lusuba lukalamba	November	Early rains	Getting scarce	,, ,,	Mound digging and sowing	Fish-spearing and trapping on flats	..	..	Fish-poisoning.
Mupundu	December	Mid-rains	Hunger month	Sowing main crop	,, ,,	..	Sowing main crop	Mound digging and sowing	Fruits.
Cinshi kubili	No English equivalent. The 13th month	,, ,,	,, ,,	,, ,,	,, ,,	,, ,,	,, ,,	,, ,,	Collecting mushrooms.
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562 often becomes imperious and managing and obviously enjoys her position as she sits on the verandah of a large hut, directing operations and dividing food. This is the position a woman achieves by a stable marriage, and one which she longs to achieve.

833 Sex relations are openly desired by Bemba and celibacy for men or women is not admired. A girl who rejects men is criticized as having 'pride of the womb' (*cilumba ca munda*). Abstinence is only practised for ritual reasons, by a woman nursing a child, for instance. Adultery in women was, however, savagely punished in 837 the old days and is a cause of divorce. It is still thought to cause death in childbirth. Men are not very seriously criticized for adultery although it is thought a terrible crime for them to 'kill' their children by not submitting to the purification rites.

462 The two sexes are divided in everyday life as regards their work 264 and recreations. Men sit in their own shelter at night and eat together there. Women, on the other hand, are grouped round their own house verandahs. Men have their own economic tasks and 593 women theirs. Girls do not enter marriage with any ideal of companionship with their husband. A young couple is not expected to show affection in public and a bridegroom tends to be despised for spending time with his wife. But affection grows over the years in the case of a stable marriage.

593 There are certain obvious contradictions in the husband's 562 position. Menfolk are dominant in Bemba society. Women used to [576] greet men kneeling, and they still do so on formal occasions today. Men receive the best of the food and take precedence at beer drinks and on other social occasions. They speak first in family matters. Men are expected to take the initiative in sex affairs. Women are married (*ukuupwa*—the passive form) while men marry (*ukuupa*—the active form). Girls are taught to please their husbands and are considered responsible for giving them pleasure in sex relations. Women calmly accept the fact that their husbands will beat them 'when they are young and their hearts get hot quickly'.

593 The contradiction between the masterful male and the sub- 562 missive son-in-law, between the secure young married woman backed by her own relatives and the submissive kneeling wife, is one which first struck me forcibly in the course of the chisungu